

Message

From: Bassler, Rachel [Bassler.Rachel@epa.gov]
Sent: 2/23/2018 3:17:10 PM
To: Ballotti, Doug [ballotti.douglas@epa.gov]
CC: Borries, Samuel [borries.samuel@epa.gov]; El-Zein, Jason [el-zein.jason@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: R5 News Clips February 23, 2018

Hi Doug,

Just a heads up, I sent the clips below to the RA – not sure if last article involving OEPA will come up but she may want to know if we have been contacted by the state.

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Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

From: Bassler, Rachel
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2018 9:14 AM
To: Singer, Joshua <Singer.Joshua@epa.gov>; Arcaute, Francisco <Arcaute.Francisco@epa.gov>; Stepp, Cathy <stepp.cathy@epa.gov>; Chu, Ed <Chu.Ed@epa.gov>; Kelley, Jeff <kelley.jeff@epa.gov>; Rowan, Anne <rowan.anne@epa.gov>; Lippert, Allison <lippert.allison@epa.gov>; Deamer, Eileen <deamer.eileen@epa.gov>; Fortin, Denise <Fortin.Denise@epa.gov>; Beckmann, Ronna Erin <beckmann.ronna@epa.gov>; Reshkin, Karen <Reshkin.Karen@epa.gov>; Dee, Rhiannon <dee.Rhiannon@epa.gov>; Peterson, John <peterson.john@epa.gov>; Thiede, Kurt <thiede.kurt@epa.gov>
Subject: R5 News Clips February 23, 2018

R5 News Clips February 23, 2018

MLive - Low PFAS levels found in major Lake Huron drinking water system
Monroe News - Walberg hopes to preserve Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
Wisconsin State Journal - EPA experts arrive at volatile chemical scene on Far West Side, Madison police say
Columbus Dispatch - South Side explosions shaking up neighbors

http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2018/02/pfas_lake_huron_saginaw-midlan.html

Low PFAS levels found in major Lake Huron drinking water system

Updated 10:43 AM; Posted Feb 21, 10:05 PM MLive Garret Ellison

AU GRES, MI -- Low levels of toxic flourochemicals have been verified in a seven-county Lake Huron bulk drinking water supply system that serves more than 260,000 people in Midland, Saginaw, Bay City and dozens of other Michigan communities.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality disclosed the discovery of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances called PFAS or PFCs in the Saginaw-Midland Municipal Water Supply Corporation (SMMWSC) system on Wednesday, Feb. 21.

The municipal utility system draws Lake Huron water through two intakes off Whitestone Point near Au Gres, where the contaminants were discovered in finished water last year.

Total PFAS in Au Gres water tested at 9.7 parts per trillion (ppt), according to a Dec. 13, 2017 letter by DEQ external relations director Sue Leeming. Of that, 4-ppt was combined PFOS and PFOA.

DEQ collected "verification" samples Dec. 7 and Jan. 11 from the utility's water intake line and two major pipelines. Low PFAS levels were found in every sample.

Total PFAS in raw water ranged from 1.3-ppt to 5.3-ppt in the sampling rounds. The highest combined PFOS and PFOA sample was 2.7-ppt.

The concentrations are well below the Environmental Protection Agency health advisory level of 70-ppt for PFOS and PFOA in drinking water, although there's scientific debate about the adequacy of that benchmark for protecting public health.

Exposure to PFAS has been linked in human studies to certain cancers, thyroid disorders, elevated cholesterol and other diseases.

DEQ did not identify a PFAS source, but advised localities to begin evaluating treatment options "due to the uncertainty on the source of this contamination in Lake Huron."

Neither Michael Quinnell, SMMWSC system general manager, nor Kim Mason, Saginaw water director, had seen DEQ verification sampling results when contacted by MLive on Feb. 16. Calls to water system managers in Au Gres and Midland were not returned.

Quinnell couldn't say whether there had been any public notification. He downplayed the seriousness by noting lower concentrations than "what we're seeing in other areas of the state."

"We're testing at parts per trillion," he said. "That's 0.000004 parts per million."

"Obviously, there's a big concern about Rockford and the air base to the north of here in Oscoda," Quinnell said, referencing the PFAS contamination caused by Wolverine World Wide waste dumping in Kent County and U.S. Air Force groundwater pollution caused by firefighting foam used at the former Wurtsmith Air Force base.

PFAS from Wurtsmith and upstream at Camp Grayling has been draining to the Au Sable River and Lake Huron since the military began using AFFF firefighting foam in the 1970s.

Mason said Saginaw hadn't conducted independent testing of its water system after being notified of Au Gres results by Quinnell on Dec. 14.

The news is concerning, she said.

"When we read the reports in other communities, it wasn't something we thought we'd have a problem with," she said. "I can't say it's completely shocking, but it isn't something I thought would be a concern looking at the source of water we're using."

The SMMWSC is a joint venture between Saginaw and Midland established in 1946. The non-profit municipal corporation operates three pumping plants which feed parallel 48- and 72-inch pipelines running south to the Tri-Cities area.

According to the DEQ, more than 50 communities source water from the system, including the Sims-Whitney Utility Authority, Linwood Metro Water District, the Saginaw-Chippewa Indian Tribe, the cities of Au Gres, Omer, Standish, and other Tri-Cities area suburbs.

The DEQ's Feb. 21 letter was copied to wholesale water customers, local health departments, Gov. Rick Snyder's office and the EPA.

The DEQ recommended affected water systems monitor for PFAS on a quarterly basis, sample finished water at treatment plant taps, notify the public and "minimize public exposure to the extent reasonably possible" by evaluating adjustments in treatment and conducting cost/benefit studies on the feasibility of installing new technology.

Conventional water treatment technologies do not remove PFAS.

In Kent County, where private and public water supplies have been contaminated by PFAS, Plainfield Township is installing a \$400,000 granular activated carbon system on its 40,000-customer system to remove PFOS and PFOA presently detectable at 6.8-ppt. PFAS was also confirmed in 2016 at similarly low levels in the Huron Shores Regional Water Authority (HSRWA) system in Tawas.

Other Michigan municipal systems with confirmed PFAS detections include Ann Arbor, Grayling and the village of Sparta.

<http://www.monroenews.com/news/20180221/walberg-hopes-to-preserve-great-lakes-restoration-initiative>

Walberg hopes to preserve Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Monroe News and AP Staff Posted Feb 21, 2018 at 4:00 PM

The GLRI brings nearly \$300 million to restoration and environmental projects across the Great Lakes.

For a second consecutive year, President Donald Trump is proposing to reduce drastically or eliminate federal support of cleanups for the Great Lakes, but U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg is hoping to convince the administration otherwise.

The Tipton Republican, who represents Monroe County, is inviting Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt to the 7th District to see the projects underway as a result of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI).

During a December Energy and Commerce Committee hearing, Walberg secured a commitment from Pruitt to work together on Great Lakes issues, he said in a press release.

"I am writing to express my deep concerns with the FY19 budget proposal that would drastically reduce funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) from roughly \$300 million dollars down to an alarming and unacceptable \$30 million," he wrote Pruitt.

"Since its inception in 2010, the GLRI has supported over 3,000 restoration projects and provided more than \$2 billion in vital funding to Great Lakes communities. These funds have been used to prevent the spread of invasive species such as Asian Carp, combat harmful algal blooms and clean up toxic areas throughout the Great Lakes region. While investments made by the GLRI program are getting positive results, there is still much work to do. As we have done during previous budgets, my colleagues and I on both sides of the aisle will continue working together to ensure the GLRI program receives the full funding it needs.

"... To continue the conversation, I would like to invite you to visit Michigan's 7th District to see firsthand some of the important work that is occurring in the Western Lake Erie Basin and the surrounding areas as a result of the GLRI," he wrote.

Trump's proposed 2019 budget for the EPA released last week would cut funding by 90 percent for the GLRI — an Obamaera plan for dealing with pervasive pollution in the world's biggest surface freshwater system — and a similar program for Chesapeake Bay, the nation's largest estuary.

It would remove all EPA funding of cleanup programs for the Gulf of Mexico, Lake Champlain, Long Island Sound, San Francisco Bay, Puget Sound and South Florida, including the Everglades and Keys.

The administration's EPA spending plan said the agency would "encourage state, tribal and local entities to continue to make progress" in those places.

The administration sought to zero out spending on the regional water initiatives in its first budget a year ago, describing them as "primarily local efforts" and contending state and local governments were capable of paying for them.

But Congress decided otherwise, illustrating the popularity of the cleanups among lawmakers of both parties and voters who want progress on longstanding problems such as toxic algae that fouls beaches, invasive species that starve out native fish and industrial toxins embedded in river bottoms.

The Great Lakes program is the largest, taking in about \$300 million annually since it was established in 2010.

Trump's budget would give it \$30 million. Chesapeake Bay, which is getting nearly \$73 million this year, would receive \$7.3 million. The other programs receive significantly less federal funding.

Supporters pledged another fight to keep them intact.

U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., denounced the proposed Great Lakes cuts as "outrageous."

"Why the Trump administration would continue to try to slash funding for the world's most important freshwater resource is beyond my comprehension," said Mike Shriberg, regional director for the National Wildlife Federation.

The Chesapeake Bay program, which dates to 1983, has accelerated in recent years in the watershed's six states and Washington, D.C., with adoption of pollution reduction targets. Trump's budget would provide money for water quality monitoring but none for cleanup work, advocates said.

"A cut of this magnitude would severely damage Bay restoration efforts, just at a time when we are seeing significant progress," said William Baker, president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox declined comment.

http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/crime/epa-experts-arrive-at-volatile-chemical-scene-on-far-west/article_bf0ea23a-051c-51f3-a82c-08629700f036.html

EPA experts arrive at volatile chemical scene on Far West Side, Madison police say

- *Wisconsin State Journal* BILL NOVAK

Cleanup on a potentially volatile chemical site on Madison's Far West Side began Thursday afternoon after experts from the Environmental Protection Agency regional office in Chicago arrived at the scene.

Madison police said EPA experts are assessing what chemicals have been found in the apartment and garage of Brian Campbell, who was arrested on Tuesday for allegedly possessing dangerous materials.

Contractors were called in Thursday afternoon at Timberlake Village Apartments to begin the cleanup.

"A time frame for how long the job will take is not currently known," said Madison police spokesman Joel DeSpain.

The 50 or so residents evacuated from the apartment building in the complex along Watts Road on Tuesday have not been allowed to return to their homes, except for brief visits to retrieve valuables, pets and other possessions on Wednesday.

Campbell, 30, was arrested on suspicion of second-degree reckless endangerment, but he had not been charged as of Thursday, according to online court records.

<http://www.dispatch.com/news/20180220/south-side-explosions-shaking-up-neighbors?start=2>

South Side explosions shaking up neighbors

Columbus Dispatch Mark Ferenchik

Explosions reportedly coming from a South Side metals-recycling plant are rattling nearby businesses and residents, who want to know what's going on and how to make it stop.

The latest boom came last week. Community leaders and residents believe the culprit is PSC Metals, 2205 Parsons Ave. The scrap-metal yard crushes cars, and residents say they've been told that gas tanks are exploding in the process.

Last week, residents began posting on social media site Next Door about a loud boom they heard around 11:10 p.m. on Feb. 13.

"I just laid down and heard it and I swear I felt my house shake," wrote Michelle Madosky, who lives almost two miles from the PSC Metals site.

Another resident, who lives on Bruck Street, wrote, "Heard it and felt it shake the house a bit. Scary!"

A third wrote, "Me too, was it an earthquake? I live on Linwood. The dog went crazy."

During an interview this week, Madosky said that she's heard rumbles before. But nothing like this.

"I knew it had to be pretty significant, whatever it was," she said.

"I always thought it was the railroad cars over here. This was different. This was so powerful it shook the ground."

A week ago, Donna Bates of the Reeb-Hosack/Steelton Village Committee emailed Richard York, PSC's yard manager, telling him that the frequency and intensity of the explosions has significantly increased. She wrote that she read social media posts from as far as the Berwick neighborhood, roughly three miles away, commenting on the forcefulness of the Feb. 13 blast.

York did not return phone and email messages. Adam Martin, the company's lawyer, did not return a call.

The explosions are also concerning neighboring businesses.

Franklin International, which makes glues, adhesives, sealants and polymers and employs 300 at its plant at 2020 Bruck St., filed suit against PSC Metals last year, claiming that explosions, excessive vibrations, noise pollution and particulate emissions were hurting Franklin's business and violating city ordinances, including zoning laws.

The suit says the vibrations and emissions have damaged Franklin's buildings and manufacturing equipment, and significantly increased maintenance costs. The explosions "cause Franklin's

employees to fear for their personal safety.” The suit asks for preliminary and permanent injunctions to prevent noise, vibrations and particulates from reaching Franklin’s property.

John Kuhl, a Columbus lawyer representing Franklin, said the explosions cause its buildings to shake. He said PSC Metals is not removing gas tanks or gasoline from cars before crushing them.

He said PSC has shown that it is unable to fix the problem.

“We’ve got videos of these explosions,” Kuhl said. “They’re frightening when they occur.”

A hearing on the preliminary injunction was held in January. Kuhl expects a decision soon. He said Franklin doesn’t want PSC to close.

PSC Metals has had at least nine fires since 2011. Last year, the company paid \$10,000 in fines after it was found guilty of two felony counts of violating metal-scraping laws.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has no pending orders or complaints against PSC, agency spokesman James Lee said. In 2017, the company resolved violations involving record-keeping, air monitoring and oil and hydraulic fluid spills.

Madosky doesn’t want a repeat of past environmental issues on the South Side, including the massive fire that consumed a recycling center on Marion Road three years ago, a blaze ignited by a cigarette.

“We had Buckeye Steel and Georgia Pacific,” Madosky said, referring to environmental hazards at the old Buckeye Steel Castings foundry, and the 1997 explosion of a resin tank at Georgia Pacific’s South Side facility.

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